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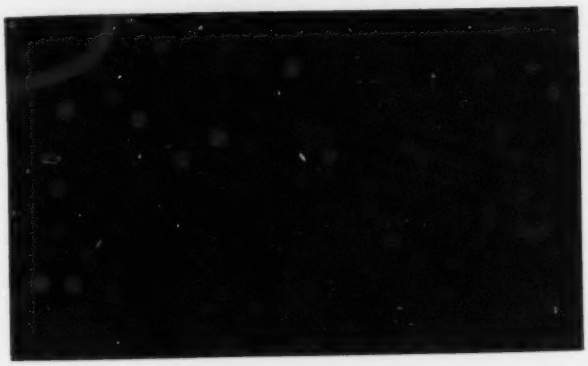
Research Report



Scarborough
Board of
Education

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY BEFORE AND AFTER CAREER FAIR

DATA ANALYSIS REPORT

#90/91 - 22

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INTRODUCTION

In April, 1991, the Scarborough Industry/Education Committee planned a Career Fair for grade 12 and OAC students from Scarborough. The objective was to provide an opportunity for these students to learn about Business and Industry by talking with personnel from these areas.

The Scarborough Career Fair Program Committee, made up of Scarborough educators, thought it would be useful to determine whether attendance at Career Fair made a difference in the students' perception of Business and Industry. To this end, the committee, with some assistance from the Research Centre, created a survey (Appendix A) to be completed by the students prior to and after attending Career Fair.

PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE

All grade 12 and OAC students were asked to complete the survey (Appendix A) one week prior to attending Career Fair. The students were again asked to complete the survey on the return bus after attending Career Fair.

A sample of the completed questionnaires was selected at random for analysis, in proportion to the number of returns from each school. Since there was no attempt to match the pre-test and post-test questionnaires for individual students, the two groups consisted of different students. Three-hundred (300) pre-test and 300 post-test questionnaires were selected for analysis, making a total of 600 questionnaires.

ANALYSIS

Data were entered on computer and the analysis was conducted using a standard statistical package. Since the pre-test and post-test groups were different, the independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there were any differences in the perception of students before and after attending Career Fair.

RESULTS

This section presents the results for each question on the survey.

How much training on the job do you feel a typical employer provides for his/her new employees?

More than half of the students, both prior to (55%), and after Career Fair (74%) felt that a typical employer provides either "a substantial amount of time" or "quite a lot of time" providing training for his/her new employees. (See Table 1.)

To test for a significant difference in the opinions of students before and after Career Fair, a mean was computed on a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 indicated "a substantial amount of time" and 3 indicated "only a basic amount of time". As indicated in Table 1, the difference between the two groups is significant, with students in the group responding after Career Fair indicating that employers spend **more** time providing training for new employees.

Table 1

AMOUNT OF TRAINING PROVIDED TO EMPLOYEES

AMOUNT OF TIME	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	SIG
A substantial amount of time	31%	37%	
Quite a lot of time	24%	37%	
Only a basic amount of time	45%	26%	
No Answer	-	-	
Mean	2.14	1.90	Yes

To what extent do you feel the business world shows concern for: the health and safety of its employees; the self-confidence and progress of its employees; and the environment and pollution?

Students were asked to indicate, on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 indicated "very little" and 5 indicated "a great deal"), the extent to which the business world shows concern for "the health and safety of its employees", "the self-confidence and progress of its employees", and the "environment and pollution".

As shown in Table 2, the business world is seen for the most part as showing concern, except in the case of "concern for environment and pollution" as perceived by the group of students tested **prior** to Career Fair.

In all cases, students in the group responding **after** Career Fair felt significantly more positive about the business world showing concern for these issues.

Table 2

EXTENT OF CONCERN

ISSUE	PRE-TEST MEAN	POST-TEST MEAN	SIG
Health and safety of employees	3.67	3.84	Yes
Self-confidence and progress of employees	3.45	3.75	Yes
Concern for environment and pollution	2.86	3.12	Yes

How sensitive do you believe the business world is to making allowances for minority groups in its staff (e.g., hiring, ethnic, the disabled, etc.)?

The students were asked to rate the sensitivity of the business world to making allowances for minority groups on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicated "not very sensitive" and 5 indicated "very sensitive". Students' perceptions that the business world is sensitive to making allowances for minority groups was greater for the group responding **after** attending Career Fair. (See Table 3.)

Table 3

SENSITIVITY TO MAKING ALLOWANCES

	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	SIG
Mean	3.13	3.31	Yes

Assuming you worked in a job that you liked, would you prefer to work in a firm that is small, medium, or large?

Whereas students in the group responding before attending Career Fair tended to prefer working in either a medium or small firm, those who responded after Career Fair seemed to prefer working in either a medium or a large firm. (See Table 4.)

Table 4

SIZE OF FIRM PREFERRED

SIZE	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	SIG
Small (up to 50 employees)	36%	26%	
Medium (51-150 employees)	39%	44%	
Large (over 150 employees)	25%	30%	
No Answer	1%	-	
Mean	1.89	2.04	Yes

A mean was calculated for each group of students on a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 indicated "small" and 3 indicated "large". The difference between the means of the two groups of students is significant and indicates that more post-test than pre-test students prefer working in larger firms.

How difficult do you think it is for employers to find new staff when filling a vacancy?

Over half of the students in both groups (60% pre-test; 59% post-test) felt that it is "fairly difficult" for employers to find new staff when filling a vacancy. (See Table 5.)

Table 5

DIFFICULTY IN FINDING NEW STAFF

DIFFICULTY	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	SIG
Very difficult	7%	8%	
Fairly difficult	60%	59%	
Not difficult	33%	33%	
Mean	2.26	2.24	No

Means for both groups were calculated on a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 indicating "very difficult" and 3 indicating "not difficult". There was no significant difference for students responding before and those who responded after Career Fair, in terms of their perceptions about how difficult it is for employers to find new staff.

Other than good skills for the job, select from the list given those three that you believe an employer would rank most important during an interview.

As can be seen from Table 6 below, "reliability" was selected by most students (69% pre-test; 60% post-test) to be among the top three that an employer would rank most important during an interview. The next highest proportion of students (58% pre-test; 49% post-test) chose "ability to work well with others", followed by "ability to follow instructions" (48% pre-test; 44% post-test) and "neatness in appearance" (43% pre-test and 44% post-test).

Table 6

IMPORTANCE OF SKILL TO EMPLOYERS

SKILL	PRE/POST	% RATING IT AMONG TOP THREE
Reliability	Pre-test	69%
	Post-test	60%
Neatness in appearance	Pre-test	43%
	Post-test	44%
Ability to work well with others	Pre-test	58%
	Post-test	49%
Eye contact in conversations	Pre-test	20%
	Post-test	23%
Confidence/sense of ease	Pre-test	33%
	Post-test	38%
Ability to follow instructions	Pre-test	48%
	Post-test	44%
Ability to express oneself	Pre-test	24%
	Post-test	28%

What are three aspects to a full time job that would give you personal satisfaction?

Detailed responses to this question appear in Appendix B. Both before and after Career Fair, the most popular aspects to a job that students indicated would give them personal satisfaction are as follows:

- Good salary
- Working well with co-workers/nice, friendly co-workers
- Interesting/enjoyable work
- Decent working hours
- Good benefits

Which of these three aspects would be most important for you?

In terms of the most important aspect to a job, students indicated the following five most often, both before and after Career Fair. (See Appendix C for more details.)

- Good salary
- Interesting/enjoyable work
- Nice, friendly co-workers
- Clean, safe working environment
- Promotion opportunities

How do you think a business would rate each of these three priorities?

... maintaining its number of staff:

As can be seen from Table 7, at least half of the students (60% pre-test and 50% post-test) felt that a business would rate "maintaining its number of staff" as "somewhat important".

Table 7

IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING NUMBER OF STAFF

IMPORTANCE	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	SIG
Very important	32%	40%	
Somewhat important	60%	50%	
Not important	7%	5%	
No answer	2%	5%	
Mean	1.74	1.64	Yes

Means calculated on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 = "very important"; 3 = "not important"), proved to be significantly different for the pre-test and post-test groups. The group of respondents after Career Fair felt that a business would rate "maintaining its number of staff" as being more important than did the group before Career Fair.

... maintaining its level of profits

Most students, both before (86%) and after (83%) attending Career Fair felt that a business would rate "maintaining its level of profits" as being "very important". (See Table 8.)

The means, calculated on a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 indicating "very important" and 3 indicating "not important", were found to be no different for the two groups of students. (See Table 8)

Table 8

IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING LEVEL OF PROFITS

IMPORTANCE	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	SIG
Very important	86%	83%	
Somewhat important	10%	11%	
Not important	2%	1%	
No answer	2%	5%	
Mean	1.14	1.14	No

... maintaining its efforts at conservation and environment

Over half of the respondents, both in the pre-test (54%) and in the post-test (55%) groups felt that a business would rate "maintaining its efforts at conservation and environment" as being "somewhat important" (Table 9). The results were found to be no different for the two groups of students before and after Career Fair.

Table 9

IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING EFFORTS AT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT

IMPORTANCE	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	SIG
Very important	21%	21%	
Somewhat important	54%	55%	
Not important	23%	19%	
No answer	2%	5%	
Mean	2.02	1.98	No

Suggest three different kinds of work that you believe could be satisfying to you.

When asked to list three different kinds of work that would be satisfying to them, the following jobs were listed most frequently. (See Appendix D for more details.)

Pre-test:

- Teacher
- Accountant
- Lawyer (or something related)
- Computer Analyst (or something related)
- Social Worker

Post-test:

- Accountant
- Teacher
- Lawyer (or something related)
- Police (or something related)
- Salesperson (or something related)

How likely do you feel you will find the job you want in Scarborough?

Most students (66% pre-test and 65% post-test) felt that it was either "very likely" or "fairly likely" that they would find the job they want in Scarborough. There was no difference in the results for the groups of students responding before and after Career Fair. (See Table 10.)

Table 10

LIKELIHOOD OF FINDING A JOB IN SCARBOROUGH

LIKELIHOOD	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	SIG
Very likely	15%	14%	
Fairly likely	51%	51%	
Not very likely	32%	29%	
No answer	2%	5%	
Mean	2.18	2.16	No

SUMMARY

For the most part, students tested after attending Career Fair seemed to have more positive perceptions of Business and Industry than students tested before Career Fair.

There were a few instances in which there was no difference in the groups responding before and after Career Fair:

- Almost 60 percent of the students in both groups thought that it was "fairly difficult" for employers to find new staff when filling a vacancy.

- Over 80 percent of students in both groups felt that a business would rate "maintaining its level of profits" as being "very important" and almost 55 percent in both groups felt that a business would rate "maintaining its efforts at conservation and environment" as being "somewhat important".

- Over 50 percent (51%) of the two groups of students felt that it was "fairly likely" that they will find the job they want in Scarborough.

The open-ended comments appearing in Appendices B to D may provide the reader with some useful insights.

APPENDIX A

STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS PRE/POST CAREER FAIR

We are taking a random sample of Scarborough's senior High School students in order to measure students' ideas about and knowledge of the business world. Your answers will be valuable and appreciated.

1. How much training on the job do you feel a typical employer provides for his/her new employees?

(Check One)

A substantial amount of time ☐
Quite a lot of time ☐
Only a basic amount of time ☐

2. To what extent do you feel the business world shows concern for:

	Very Little				Great Deal
a) Health and safety of its employees?	1	2	3	4	5
b) The self-confidence and progress of its employees?	1	2	3	4	5
c) Concern for environment and pollution?	1	2	3	4	5

(Circle One Each)

3. How sensitive do you believe the business world is to making allowances for minority groups in its staff (e.g. hiring, ethnic, the disabled, etc)?

Not Very Sensitive				Very Sensitive
1	2	3	4	5

4. Assuming you worked in a job that you liked, would you prefer to work in a firm that is

small (say up to 50 employees)? _____
medium (say 51- 150 employees)? _____
large (over 150 employees)? _____ (check one)

5. How difficult do you think it is for employers to find new staff when filling a vacancy?

Very difficult ___ Fairly difficult_____ Not difficult_____

6. Other than good skills for the job, select from the list given those three that you believe an employer would rank most important during an interview.

_____

_____

_____

Reliability
Neatness in Appearance
Ability to work well with others
Eye contact in conversation
Confidence/sense of ease
Ability to follow instructions
Ability to express oneself

7. a. What are three aspects to a full time job that would give you personal satisfaction?

_____

_____

_____

b. Which of these three would be the most important for you?

_____

8. How do you think a business would rate each of these three priorities?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a. maintaining its number of staff			
b. maintaining its level of profits			
c. Maintaining its efforts at conservation and environment.			

9. Suggest three different kinds of work that you believe could be satisfying to you:

_____

_____

_____

10. How likely do you feel you will find the job you want in Scarborough?

Very likely _____ Fairly likely_____Not very likely _____

THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING !!

APPENDIX B

Question 7(a) - What are three aspects to a full time job that would give you personal satisfaction?

Pre-test

- good salary/wages (201)
- friendly co-workers/working well with co-workers (104)
- interesting/enjoyable work (67)
- decent working hours (48)
- good benefits (43)
- clean, safe working environment (40)
- promotion opportunities (36)
- understanding employer (29)
- relaxed, comfortable working atmosphere (20)
- doing the job well (17)
- recognition of work well done (4)
- respect from others (19)
- holiday/vacation time (13)
- challenging work/variety of work (21)
- self-satisfaction/fulfilment (12)
- accomplishment (12)
- job security (11)
- self-confidence (9)
- independence/working on own (8)
- responsibility (8)
- reliability (7)
- gaining experience (6)
- ability to communicate well (6)
- understanding others' needs/wants (6)
- interaction with people (6)
- neatness (5)
- pay raise (5)
- ability to help others (5)
- paid overtime (4)
- status (4)
- seniority (3)
- fairness (3)
- long lunch break (3)
- location (3)
- good training program (3)
- easy work (2)
- contribution to society (2)
- power/authority (2)
- education (2)
- entrepreneurship (2)
- bonus (2)

Post-test

- good salary/wages (193)
- nice, friendly co-workers (70)
- interesting/enjoyable work (56)
- good benefits (43)
- decent working hours (42)
- clean, safe working environment (40)
- promotion opportunities (31)
- working well with co-workers (27)
- accomplishment (19)
- challenging work (16)
- self-satisfaction/fulfilment (15)
- job security (16)
- an understanding employer (11)
- self-confidence (10)
- respect from others (10)
- reliability (8)
- status (8)
- job well done (6)
- variety of work (6)
- communicating well (6)
- easy work (5)
- ability to help others (5)
- recognition for work well done (5)
- understanding others' needs/wants (5)
- location (5)
- power (5)
- appearance (4)
- responsibility (4)
- fairness (4)
- gaining experience (3)
- training program (3)
- neatness (3)
- vacation time (3)
- independence/working on own (3)
- personal relationship (3)
- communicate well (2)
- break times (2)
- travel (2)
- meeting new people (2)
- fun job (2)
- self employment (2)
- educational (1)
- sense of belonging to the company (1)

PRE-TEST - cont'd

- accessibility to terminals (2)
- female boss (1)
- competitive (1)
- profit sharing (1)
- meeting with top management frequently (1)
- physical work (1)
- not wearing uniform (1)
- small office (1)
- honesty (1)
- leadership role (1)
- creative control (1)
- company policies (1)

POST-TEST - cont'd

- outside work (1)
- mobility (1)
- ability (1)
- creative work (1)
- trust (1)
- art (1)
- music (1)
- literature (1)
- computer programming (1)
- marketing (1)
- salesman (1)
- doctor (1)
- entrepreneur (1)

APPENDIX C

Question 7b. Which of these three would be the most important to you?

Pre-test

- good salary/wages (91)
- interesting/enjoyable work (44)
- nice, friendly co-workers (19)
- clean, safe working environment (12)
- promotion opportunities (10)
- decent working hours (7)
- job well done (7)
- good benefits (6)
- recognition of job well done (6)
- respect from others (5)
- self-satisfaction/fulfilment (5)
- working well with co-workers (5)
- sense of accomplishment (4)
- reliability (4)
- an understanding employer (4)
- confidence (4)
- relaxed, comfortable atmosphere (3)
- job security (3)
- status (2)
- variety of work (2)
- ability to help others (2)
- interaction with people (2)
- responsibility (2)
- challenging work (2)
- gaining experience (2)
- independence/working on own (2)
- fun job (1)
- easy work (1)
- competitive (1)
- profit-sharing (1)
- fairness (1)
- understanding others' needs/wants (1)
- contribution to society (1)
- location (1)
- pay raise (1)
- chance to express own ideas (1)
- honesty (1)
- leadership role (1)
- vacation time (1)
- training program (1)
- dealing with children (1)
- right to strike (1)

Post-test

- good salary/wages (117)
- interesting, enjoyable work (32)
- nice, friendly co-workers (15)
- clean, safe working environment (8)
- promotion opportunities (8)
- working well with co-workers (6)
- self-confidence (6)
- good benefits (6)
- job security (6)
- ability to help others (4)
- decent working hours (4)
- self-satisfaction/fulfilment (3)
- an understanding employer (3)
- job well done (2)
- challenging work (2)
- recognition of job well done (2)
- respect from others (2)
- meeting people (2)
- understanding others' needs/wants (2)
- power (2)
- educational (1)
- sense of belonging to the company (1)
- communicating well (1)
- neatness (1)
- accomplishment (1)
- reliability (1)
- active work (1)
- mobility (1)
- entrepreneur (1)
- fairness (1)
- ability (1)
- creative work (1)
- training program (1)
- location (1)
- trust (1)
- art (1)
- computer programming (1)
- doctor (1)

APPENDIX D

Question 9 Three different kinds of work that you believe could be satisfying to you.

Pre-test

- teaching (54)
- accountant (39)
- legal/lawyer (38)
- computer technology/analyst (33)
- social worker (31)
- secretarial/clerical (30)
- entrepreneur/own business (29)
- executive (25)
- mechanic (22)
- sales/retail (21)
- performing arts (20)
- banking (18)
- nursing (17)
- child/youth care (16)
- doctor (15)
- police force (15)
- health/medicine (15)
- psychologist (13)
- engineer (13)
- artist, commercial/graphic (12)
- architecture (11)
- business administrator (11)
- advertising (11)
- travel/tourism/hospitality (8)
- marketing (8)
- scientific research (8)
- broadcasting (8)
- electrician (7)
- entertainment industry (7)
- restaurant, cook/chef (7)
- electronics (7)
- physiotherapist (6)
- industrial designer (6)
- armed forces (6)
- veterinarian (6)
- driver (6)
- dentist (6)
- construction (6)
- pro-athlete (6)
- photographer (6)
- firefighter (6)
- journalism (5)
- counsellor (5)
- environmentalist (5)

Post-test

- accountant (45)
- teaching (37)
- legal/lawyer (32)
- police force (31)
- sales/retail (28)
- banking (20)
- secretarial/clerical (20)
- computer technology/analyst (20)
- entrepreneur/own business (20)
- executive (17)
- social worker (17)
- health/medicine (16)
- pro athlete (16)
- doctor (15)
- engineer (15)
- travel/tourism/hospitality (14)
- architecture (14)
- business administrator (14)
- nursing (14)
- marketing (12)
- performing arts (10)
- psychologist (10)
- child/youth care (10)
- hotel manager (9)
- advertising (9)
- scientific research (8)
- construction (8)
- entertainment industry (7)
- mechanic (7)
- make-up (7)
- model (6)
- armed forces (6)
- scientist (6)
- massage therapist (6)
- broadcasting (5)
- pilot (5)
- politics (5)
- dentist (5)
- industrial designer (4)
- economics (4)
- stock broker (4)
- electrician (4)
- cashier (4)
- journalism (4)

PRE-TEST - cont'd

- product manufacturing (5)
- stock broker (4)
- hotel manager (4)
- interior designer (4)
- consultant (4)
- forestry (4)
- politics (4)
- economics (3)
- fashion designer (3)
- cashier (3)
- pilot (3)
- scientist (3)
- model (2)
- draftsman (2)
- writer (2)
- real estate (2)
- recreation (2)
- make-up/hairdresser (2)
- technician (2)
- easy work (2)
- landscaping (1)
- oceanographer (1)
- farm/agriculture (1)
- anthropologist (1)
- dishwasher (1)
- car wash (1)
- optometrist (1)
- criminologist (1)
- working outdoors (1)
- tool & diemaker (1)
- geologist (1)
- librarian (1)
- meat cutter (1)
- cosmetology (1)
- astronaut (1)
- plumber (1)
- civil service (1)
- flight attendant (1)
- waitress (1)
- don't know (1)
- doing nothing (1)

POST-TEST - cont'd

- interior designer (4)
- pharmacist (4)
- photographer (4)
- flight attendant (4)
- fashion designer (3)
- animal care/shelter (3)
- veternarian (3)
- driver (3)
- consultant (3)
- restaurant, cook/chef (3)
- plumber (3)
- electronics (3)
- commercial artist (3)
- physio-therapist (2)
- farm/agriculture (2)
- security guard (2)
- counsellor (2)
- real estate (2)
- writer (1)
- landscaping (1)
- Prime Minister (1)
- marine biology (1)
- chiropractor (1)
- firefighter (1)
- private investigator (1)
- environmentalist (1)
- sheet metal (1)
- racehorse breeder (1)
- aerospace (1)
- oceanographer (1)
- immigration (1)
- product manufacturing (1)
- optometrist (1)
- housewife (1)
- civil service (1)
- insurance (1)
- waitress (1)
- public relations (1)